THE SIGN OF THE FOUR

(ILLUSTRATED)

BY

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY MURAT UKRAY

ILLUSTRATED &

PUBLISHED BY

E-KİTAP PROJESİ & CHEAPEST BOOKS

www.cheapestboooks.com

Copyright, 2014 by e-Kitap Projesi

Istanbul

ISBN:

978-625-6235-68-7

Copyright© Printing and publication rights belong to the author's & Publisher's own restriction, using and working. According to the law of intellectual and artistic works, without permission in part or in whole not re-produced or re-published. Welding can be done by showing short excerpts..



About Author



Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle (22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930) was a Scottish physician and writer who is most noted for his fictional stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes, which are generally considered milestones in the field of crime fiction. He is also known for writing the fictional adventures of a second character he invented, Professor Challenger, and for popularising the mystery of the *Mary Celeste*. He was a prolific writer whose other works include fantasy and science fiction stories, plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction, and historical novels.

Preface (About the Book)



The Sign of the Four (1890), also called *The Sign of Four*, is the second novel featuring Sherlock Holmes written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Doyle wrote four novels and 56 stories starring the fictional detective.

The story is set in 1888. *The Sign of the Four* has a complex plot involving service in East India Company, India, the Indian Rebellion of 1857, a stolen treasure, and a secret pact among four convicts ("the Four" of the title) and two corrupt prison guards. It presents the detective's drug habit and humanizes him in a way that had not been done in the preceding novel *A Study in Scarlet* (1887). It also introduces Doctor Watson's future wife, Mary Morstan.

Short Summary

Synopsis

In 1888 a client, Mary Morstan, comes with two puzzles for Holmes. The first is the disappearance of her father Captain Arthur Morstan in December 1878 and the second is that she has received 6 pearls in the mail from an anonymous benefactor once a year since 1882, since she answered an anonymous newspaper query inquiring for her. With the last pearl she has received a letter remarking that she has been a wronged woman and asks for meeting. Holmes takes the case and soon discovers that Major Sholto — Morstan's only friend who had denied seeing Morstan — had died in 1882 and that within a short span of time Mary began to receive the pearls, implying a connection. The only clue Mary can give Holmes is a map of a fortress with the names of Jonathan Small and three Sikhs, who are named Dost Akbar, Abdullah Khan, and Mahomet Singh.

Holmes, Watson, and Mary meet Thaddeus Sholto, the son of the late Major Sholto and Capt Morstan's Army friend who has sent her the pearls. Thaddeus remarks that his father had a paranoid fear of one-legged men and confirms that Mary's father had seen the Major the night he died. That night, in a quarrel about an Agra Treasure, Morstan — who was in weak

health — suffered a heart attack. Not wanting to bring attention to the object of the quarrel to public notice, Sholto disposed of the body and hid the treasure. However his own health became worse when he received a letter from India. Dying, he called his two sons and confessed to Morstan's death and was about to divulge the location of the treasure when he suddenly cried "Keep him out!". The puzzled sons glimpsed a face in the window but the only trace was a single footstep in the dirt. On their father's body is a note reading "The Sign of Four". Both brothers quarreled over whether a legacy should be left to Mary Morstan and Thaddeus left his brother Bartholomew, taking a chaplet and sending its pearls to Mary. The reason he sent the letter is that Bartholomew has found the treasure and possibly Thaddeus and Mary might confront him for a division of it.

Bartholomew is found dead in his home from a poison dart and the treasure is missing. While the police wrongly take Thaddeus in as a suspect Holmes deduces that there are two persons involved in the murder: a one-legged man, Jonathan Small, as well as another "small" accomplice. He traces them to a boat landing where Small has hired a launch named the *Aurora*. With the help of his Baker Street Irregulars and his own disguise Holmes traces the launch. In a Police launch Holmes and Watson chase the *Aurora* and capture it but

in the process end up killing the "small" companion after he attempts to kill Holmes with a poisoned dart shot from a blow-pipe. Small tries to escape but is captured. However the iron treasure box is empty; Small claims to have dumped the treasure over the side during the chase.

Small confesses that years before he was a soldier of the Third Buffs in India and lost his leg in a swimming accident to a crocodile. After some time, when he was an overseer on a tea plantation, the Indian Rebellion of 1857 occurred and he was forced to flee for his life to the Agra fortress. While standing guard one night he was overpowered by two Sikh troopers who gave him a choice of being killed or being an accomplice to waylaying a disguised servant of a Rajah who sent the servant with a valuable fortune in pearls and jewels to the British for safekeeping. The robbery and murder took place and the crime was discovered, although the jewels were not. Small got penal servitude on the Andaman Islands, and after twenty years he overheared that Sholto has lost money gambling. Small sees his chance and makes a deal with Sholto and Morstan - Sholto will recover the treasure and in return send a boat to pick up Small and the Sikhs. Sholto double-crosses both Morstan and Small and steals the treasure for himself. Small vows vengeance and escapes the Andaman Islands with an islander named Tonga. It was

the news of his escape that shocked Sholto into his fatal illness. Small arrives too late to hear of the treasure's location but leaves the note which refers to the name of the pact between himself and his three Sikh accomplices. When Bartholomew found the treasure Small planned to only steal it but claims a miscommunication led Tonga to kill him as well.

Mary Morstan is left without the bulk of the Agra treasure, although she will apparently receive the rest of the Chaplet. John Watson falls in love with Mary, and we learn at the end that he has proposed to her and she has accepted.

* * * * *

Table of Contents

THE SIGN OF THE FOUR (ILLUSTRATED) _____ *1*

About Author _____ *3*

Preface (About the Book) _____ *4*

Table of Contents _____ *9*

Chapter I _____ *11*

The Science of Deduction _____ 11

Chapter II _____ *25*

The Statement of the Case _____ 25

Chapter III _____ *35*

In Quest of a Solution _____ 35

Chapter IV _____ *44*

The Story of the Bald Headed Man _____ 44

Chapter V _____ *60*

The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge _____ 60

Chapter VI _____ *73*

Sherlock Holmes Gives a Demonstration _____ 73

Chapter VII _____ *88*

The Episode of the Barrel _____ 88

Chapter VIII _____ *108*

The Baker Street Irregulars _____ 108

Chapter IX _____ *125*

A Break In the Chain _____ 125

Chapter X _____ *142*

The End of the Islander _____ 142

Chapter XI _____ *157*

The Great Agra Treasure _____ 157

Chapter XII _____ *167*

The Strange Story of Jonathan Small _____ 167



Chapter I

The Science of Deduction



Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantel-piece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous

fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction.

Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but custom had not reconciled my mind to it. On the contrary, from day to day I had become more irritable at the sight, and my conscience swelled nightly within me at the thought that I had lacked the courage to protest. Again and again I had registered a vow that I should deliver my soul upon the subject, but there was that in the cool, nonchalant air of my companion which made him the last man with whom one would care to take anything approaching to a liberty. His great powers, his masterly manner, and the experience which I had had of his many extraordinary qualities, all made me diffident and backward in crossing him.

Yet upon that afternoon, whether it was the Beaune which I had taken with my lunch, or the additional exasperation produced by the extreme deliberation of his manner, I suddenly felt that I could hold out no longer.

"Which is it to-day?" I asked,—"morphine or cocaine?"

He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened. "It is cocaine," he said,—"a seven-per-cent. solution. Would you care to try it?"

"No, indeed," I answered, brusquely. "My constitution has not got over the Afghan campaign yet. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it."

He smiled at my vehemence. "Perhaps you are right, Watson," he said. "I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one. I find it, however, so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment."

"But consider!" I said, earnestly. "Count the cost! Your brain may, as you say, be roused and excited, but it is a pathological and morbid process, which involves increased tissue-change and may at last leave a permanent weakness. You know, too, what a black reaction comes upon you. Surely the game is hardly worth the candle. Why should you, for a mere passing pleasure, risk the loss of those great powers with which you have been endowed? Remember that I speak not only as one comrade to another, but as a medical man to one for whose constitution he is to some extent answerable."

He did not seem offended. On the contrary, he put his finger-tips together and leaned his elbows on the

arms of his chair, like one who has a relish for conversation.

"My mind," he said, "rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession,—or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world."

"The only unofficial detective?" I said, raising my eyebrows.

"The only unofficial consulting detective," he answered. "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection. When Gregson or Lestrade or Athelney Jones are out of their depths—which, by the way, is their normal state—the matter is laid before me. I examine the data, as an expert, and pronounce a specialist's opinion. I claim no credit in such cases. My name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward. But you have yourself had some experience of my methods of work in the Jefferson Hope case."

"Yes, indeed," said I, cordially. "I was never so struck by anything in my life. I even embodied it in a

small brochure with the somewhat fantastic title of 'A Study in Scarlet.'"

He shook his head sadly. "I glanced over it," said he. "Honestly, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid."

"But the romance was there," I remonstrated. "I could not tamper with the facts."

"Some facts should be suppressed, or at least a just sense of proportion should be observed in treating them. The only point in the case which deserved mention was the curious analytical reasoning from effects to causes by which I succeeded in unraveling it."

I was annoyed at this criticism of a work which had been specially designed to please him. I confess, too, that I was irritated by the egotism which seemed to demand that every line of my pamphlet should be devoted to his own special doings. More than once during the years that I had lived with him in Baker Street I had observed that a small vanity underlay my companion's quiet and didactic manner. I made no remark, however, but sat nursing my wounded leg. I

had a Jezail bullet through it some time before, and, though it did not prevent me from walking, it ached wearily at every change of the weather.

"My practice has extended recently to the Continent," said Holmes, after a while, filling up his old brier-root pipe. "I was consulted last week by Francois Le Villard, who, as you probably know, has come rather to the front lately in the French detective service. He has all the Celtic power of quick intuition, but he is deficient in the wide range of exact knowledge which is essential to the higher developments of his art. The case was concerned with a will, and possessed some features of interest. I was able to refer him to two parallel cases, the one at Riga in 1857, and the other at St. Louis in 1871, which have suggested to him the true solution. Here is the letter which I had this morning acknowledging my assistance." He tossed over, as he spoke, a crumpled sheet of foreign notepaper. I glanced my eyes down it, catching a profusion of notes of admiration, with stray "magnifiques," "coup-de-maitres," and "tours-de-force," all testifying to the ardent admiration of the Frenchman.

"He speaks as a pupil to his master," said I.

"Oh, he rates my assistance too highly," said Sherlock Holmes, lightly. "He has considerable gifts himself. He possesses two out of the three qualities

necessary for the ideal detective. He has the power of observation and that of deduction. He is only wanting in knowledge; and that may come in time. He is now translating my small works into French."

"Your works?"

"Oh, didn't you know?" he cried, laughing. "Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs. They are all upon technical subjects. Here, for example, is one 'Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccoes.' In it I enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar-, cigarette-, and pipe-tobacco, with colored plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is continually turning up in criminal trials, and which is sometimes of supreme importance as a clue. If you can say definitely, for example, that some murder has been done by a man who was smoking an Indian lunkah, it obviously narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird's-eye as there is between a cabbage and a potato."

"You have an extraordinary genius for minutiae," I remarked.

"I appreciate their importance. Here is my monograph upon the tracing of footsteps, with some remarks upon the uses of plaster of Paris as a preserver of impresses. Here, too, is a curious little work upon the

influence of a trade upon the form of the hand, with lithotypes of the hands of slaters, sailors, corkcutters, compositors, weavers, and diamond-polishers. That is a matter of great practical interest to the scientific detective,—especially in cases of unclaimed bodies, or in discovering the antecedents of criminals. But I weary you with my hobby."

"Not at all," I answered, earnestly. "It is of the greatest interest to me, especially since I have had the opportunity of observing your practical application of it. But you spoke just now of observation and deduction. Surely the one to some extent implies the other."

"Why, hardly," he answered, leaning back luxuriously in his arm-chair, and sending up thick blue wreaths from his pipe. "For example, observation shows me that you have been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction lets me know that when there you dispatched a telegram."

"Right!" said I. "Right on both points! But I confess that I don't see how you arrived at it. It was a sudden impulse upon my part, and I have mentioned it to no one."

"It is simplicity itself," he remarked, chuckling at my surprise,—"so absurdly simple that an explanation is superfluous; and yet it may serve to define the limits of

observation and of deduction. Observation tells me that you have a little reddish mould adhering to your instep. Just opposite the Seymour Street Office they have taken up the pavement and thrown up some earth which lies in such a way that it is difficult to avoid treading in it in entering. The earth is of this peculiar reddish tint which is found, as far as I know, nowhere else in the neighborhood. So much is observation. The rest is deduction."

"How, then, did you deduce the telegram?"

"Why, of course I knew that you had not written a letter, since I sat opposite to you all morning. I see also in your open desk there that you have a sheet of stamps and a thick bundle of post-cards. What could you go into the post-office for, then, but to send a wire? Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth."

"In this case it certainly is so," I replied, after a little thought. "The thing, however, is, as you say, of the simplest. Would you think me impertinent if I were to put your theories to a more severe test?"

"On the contrary," he answered, "it would prevent me from taking a second dose of cocaine. I should be delighted to look into any problem which you might submit to me."

"I have heard you say that it is difficult for a man to have any object in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in such a way that a trained observer might read it. Now, I have here a watch which has recently come into my possession. Would you have the kindness to let me have an opinion upon the character or habits of the late owner?"

I handed him over the watch with some slight feeling of amusement in my heart, for the test was, as I thought, an impossible one, and I intended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which he occasionally assumed. He balanced the watch in his hand, gazed hard at the dial, opened the back, and examined the works, first with his naked eyes and then with a powerful convex lens. I could hardly keep from smiling at his crestfallen face when he finally snapped the case to and handed it back.

"There are hardly any data," he remarked. "The watch has been recently cleaned, which robs me of my most suggestive facts."

"You are right," I answered. "It was cleaned before being sent to me." In my heart I accused my companion of putting forward a most lame and impotent excuse to cover his failure. What data could he expect from an uncleaned watch?

"Though unsatisfactory, my research has not been entirely barren," he observed, staring up at the ceiling with dreamy, lack-lustre eyes. "Subject to your correction, I should judge that the watch belonged to your elder brother, who inherited it from your father."

"That you gather, no doubt, from the H. W. upon the back?"

"Quite so. The W. suggests your own name. The date of the watch is nearly fifty years back, and the initials are as old as the watch: so it was made for the last generation. Jewelry usually descends to the eldest son, and he is most likely to have the same name as the father. Your father has, if I remember right, been dead many years. It has, therefore, been in the hands of your eldest brother."

"Right, so far," said I. "Anything else?"

"He was a man of untidy habits,—very untidy and careless. He was left with good prospects, but he threw away his chances, lived for some time in poverty with occasional short intervals of prosperity, and finally, taking to drink, he died. That is all I can gather."

I sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room with considerable bitterness in my heart.

"This is unworthy of you, Holmes," I said. "I could not have believed that you would have descended to